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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the role of school curriculums in influencing students' behavior in relation to the drinking of alcoholic beverages and driving or consenting to be a passenger in a car. It examines the moral reasons why people should not drink and drive and how schools can influence this morality through behavioral and developmental approaches. Developing student moral awareness is considered in terms of the establishing of specific courses and the integration of alcohol-related topics into established courses. Classroom instruction should focus on the role of alcohol in society, the law as it relates to alcohol use, and social conventions and morality issues in alcohol abuse. The paper suggests that teachers use established curriculums and: (1) present an anti-alcohol message to elementary and secondary students; (2) adopt a situation-specific teaching approach; (3) integrate these lessons into a larger moral education theme; (4) strive for cognitive and affective learning; and (5) illustrate the lessons with practical examples. Twenty-one references are included. (JHP)

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CURRICULUM PACKAGES OR PACKAGING THE CURRICULUM: DRINK-DRIVING AND THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

by

John G. Lidstone

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CURRICULUM PACKAGES OR PACKAGING THE CURRICULUM
DRINK-DRIVING AND THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

John G. Lidstone

(Presented to the Drink-Driving Educators' Conference arranged by the Drink Driving Project, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine of the University of Queensland, and held at the Surfair International Hotel, Maroochydore, Queensland from 18 - 21 October, 1987)

1. Introduction

In approaching the vexed question of drinking and driving and the potential contribution of school curricula to reaching a 'solution', I was aware of the approach adopted by the University of Queensland Drink-Driving Project team (Gaskill et al 1987) as presented in their paper to the National Evaluation Conference. In that paper, the authors cited evidence that two-thirds of a sample of Queensland High School students of less than the licencing age had been passengers of a drink-driver in the preceding year and a quarter had been personally in control of a vehicle on public roads while under the influence of alcohol. On the basis of such evidence, a ten-lesson educational programme was developed with the stated goals:

1. to increase students' intentions to not drink and drive/ride or be a passenger of a drink driver; and
2. to increase students' intentions to use alternative strategies to avoid drinking and driving/riding or being the passenger of a drink driver.

It is very difficult not to be enthusiastic about a project which has such clear and unequivocal aims. However, thinking back to my years of teaching at the chalkface, I found a number of reservations came to mind. These reservations related, firstly, to the wisdom of having any courses offered in schools with aims limited to single issues, and secondly, from a professional cynicism about the capacity of any course offered over a relatively short period of time to have any long term effects on behaviour.

My first concern is mainly about the sheer number of issues which schools are asked to address. Without too much effort I can think of claims for courses to be offered in:
AIDS education, sex education, parenting, peace education, road safety education, driver education, environmental education, consumer education, political education, substance abuse, drug abuse, alcohol education, career education and shortly, disaster response education.

All these areas undoubtedly include important issues which should be raised with young people, and equally undoubtedly, the schools provide an important forum through which the issues may be conveniently addressed. However, the large numbers of concerned groups making claims for time during the school day will also include those who, wearing other hats, express concern about the standards of literacy and numeracy of our young people and press the claim for general academic study. In each of these areas, there are people who are especially aware of some great need in our society and who press for curriculum time in order that their own areas of concern can be grafted on to an already crowded curriculum.

My second concern is with the effectiveness of such courses in more than the very short term.

Being rather embarrassed at the memories of my own youth when drinking (under age) and driving (my father's car) were not infrequently associated , I looked back at the results of a Gallup Poll conducted in the U.K. in 1964 which found that, of seven relatively common immoral acts, drinking and driving was regarded by the sample with greatest opprobrium with 90% expressing disapproval. I would not dream of drawing many conclusions based on comparisons of two surveys separated by nearly quarter of a century and 16000 miles, but the comparisons of my own youthful memories and the stated moral beliefs of that time raised a question in my mind about the links between beliefs and actions. Had I been surveyed by Mr Gallup, I am sure that, as a very responsible and seriously minded young adult, I would have unhesitatingly expressed my abhorrence of drinking and driving. At the same time, I am sure that I would have been very pursuasive, to my own conscience at least, in justifying my actions on those occasions when I did drive having consumed alcohol.

However, it could be that I was brought up as part of a particularly irresponsible generation, or that my English heritage makes me particularly susceptible to the maintenance of double standards, so to check the attitudes of Australian young people of the late 1980s, I raised the question informally with two groups of students at Brisbane C.A.E. I found almost universal agreement that drinking and driving are wrong, but to my surprise, also found that a very high proportion, over 80%, were prepared to admit that, despite a general intention to avoid drink driving, they frequently broke their own stated moral code in this respect. Furthermore, the justifications offered by today's Australian students for driving after drinking showed as much, or as little, creativity as my own would have done all those years ago.

This led me to doubt, just a little, the long term effectiveness of a project aimed specifically at influencing students' intentions in something as specific as drinking and driving behaviour. The result of my thoughts on this matter led me to ponder the role of school curricula in influencing students' behaviour and while thinking such thoughts, I came across a summary by Ptolemy in the Geographical Magazine of an article by Konner called "Why the reckless survive". Stating that lottery players are irrational given the statistical odds against them, Konner points out that to evaluate lottery players' actions on this criterion alone does not take into account the thrill of playing, the subjective value placed on great wealth or that this may be the player's only chance of attaining wealth. Despite this, however, lottery players make at least one major error of judgement: they harbour unrealistically high expectations of winning. Konner suggests that this is also true in the game of life. Most people think that they will have better-than-average health, live longer than average and enjoy more durable-than-average marriages. However, since average people are likely to have average rates of death, disease and divorce, they are clearly underestimating their risks. Konner goes on to suggest that risk-taking is a manifestation of Darwinian evolution. For example, he suggests that we eat fat and sugar "because our ancestors were rewarded for such excesses with insulation to carry them through times of shortage. Death through atherosclerosis may be a threat today, but for much of the past three million years it was a consummation to life devoutly

to be wished".

From this point, Konner takes the apparently quite reasonable step of arguing that men do dangerous things (more so than women) for Darwinian reasons: more access to food and mates. Is this perhaps the reason for associating excessive speeds, alcohol and food with the 'good life' and an attractive image? Ptolemy himself suggests that both actuarial tables and the rule of law in our society indicate that men do not have to behave like deer in the rutting season to ensure the survival of their genes into the next generation, but bows to Konner's assertion that "if you are disposed, emotionally, for survival and reproduction, then you are not disposed for perfect safety". Konner closes his article with a statement which may have much to offer in the present discussion on drinking and driving: "For many of us, life seems compromised by the endless calculation of possible risks. Such calculation carries a cost - in attention, in inhibition, in self image, in fun. And the fun is not incidental. It is evolution's way of reminding us what we were designed for".

2. Why shouldn't we drink and drive?

I have quoted Konner's views extensively with my tongue more than a little in my cheek, but by being forced through his arguments to consider male, and probably adolescent male, behaviour in animal, evolutionary, terms, I was led to consider the differences between animals and human beings. The greatest difference other than the power of speech, apparently being the existence in human beings of various moral values. The definitions of moral value are many. Wynne in a recent article (1986) suggested that the term refers to the specific values that particular cultures generally hold in regard, while R.S.Peters (1958) pointed out that "Man is a rule following animal". Nucci (1986) reminds us that moral values and social convention are differentiated by children at very young ages. Wright (1971) suggested that the concept of a moral rule forms part of a network of related concepts which together make up what may be called the language of moral obligation. He gave as examples of the key concepts in this language: good, right, rights, wrong, ought, duty, virtue, guilt, responsibility, sin, and blame. Wright considered that not only do human beings say that they have obligations to one another, they feel a sense of obligation. They not only recognise that they are guilty of breaking a moral rule, they feel guilt and remorse. He concluded that the most distinctively moral experience of human beings is the conflict between inclination and duty frequently expressed in the words: "I want to but I ought not to" and "I ought to but I don't want to".

Wynne (1986) summarizes the discussions on the nature of moral behaviour by suggesting that "moral values" are the vital common beliefs that shape human relations in each culture. Whether their base is religious, traditional or secular, such values are expected to be widely affirmed under most circumstances. He goes on to suggest that in all cultures, the transmission of moral values is given high priority and gives two reasons for this:

Firstly, he quotes Cohen's (1964) statement that "No society allows for the random and promiscuous expression of emotions to just anyone. Because our means of communicating emotions are socially specific, slow maturing young persons must be socialized gradually to the right - or

moral - practices appropriate to their special environment.

Secondly, Wynne suggests that without effective moral formation, the human propensity for selfishness - or simply the advancement of self-interest - can destructively affect adult institutions. Thus, moral formation is necessary to cultivate our inherent, but moderate, propensity for disinterested sacrifice. The institutions of any persisting society must be organized to ensure that people's "unselfish genes" are adequately reinforced.

Thus, in the present context, the combination of drinking and driving a vehicle has relatively recently, in historic terms, become inappropriate to our environment. In the days of horses and carts, a drunken driver merely had to remain more or less upright on the box and the horse would probably find its own way home in safety. Even with the advent of cars, an intoxicated driver on a rarely used outback road was probably not too great a hazard. The current concern with drinking and driving is thus at least as much a function of increased speed and number of cars on the roads as with the act of driving while under the influence of drink. It is in this changed environment that we are now trying to socialize our young people into more appropriate behaviour patterns.

We are hoping to pursuade young people to say to themselves in appropriate circumstances: "I want a drink, but I ought not to have one". However, in the case of drinking and driving, we perhaps need to go still further and encourage young people to ask themselves "Why do I want a drink of alcohol rather than some other liquid?" and "Why ought I not to drink alcohol at this time?" We are trying to reinforce the "unselfish genes" which are now more necessary to survivial than heretofore.

3. How can schools influence moral development?

So far I have tried to show that the concern with drinking and driving is merely one part of an overall concern with developing a sense of appropriate moral behaviour in our young people. This has been a concern of educators for a very long time. It has been suggested that the demise of Socrates, a very early case of involuntary substance abuse, was due to concerns that his teaching was inimical to the moral development of Athenian youth. The problem for those concerned with educating the young has always been how best to induce appropriate moral attitudes in the young and whether moral behaviour is situation specific or a general quality.

There are two competing viewpoints on the ways in which programs designed to lead to moral development should be structured. The first is that there should be a concern with <u>behaviour</u>, and the second is that moral development is best encouraged through a process of continuous <u>questioning</u> of beliefs - a developmental approach.

<u>The Behavioural approach</u>

Wynne (1986) represents the first viewpoint. He argues strongly for curricula designed to result in specific behavioural ends. He cites Plato who emphasized the importance of constraining the learning influences on children and youths to ensure appropriate moral outcomes. Writing in the

context of the United States, Wynne points out that after the Revolution, many of the original thirteen states framed constitutions which included statements such as "..... no government can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality and virtue". The founders of the States believed that popular education would be the means of developing such traits. Also in the American context (although I suspect the comment is equally valid in the context of Australia) the Rothmans (1975) have written that "The business of schools in our early history was not reading and writing but citizenship; not education but social control".

Wynne has listed a number of features of what he terms the Great Tradition of transmitting moral values through popular education:

1. The tradition was concerned with good habits of conduct as contrasted with with moral concepts or moral rationales (thus: honour your father and your mother which can be seen rather than love which cannot)
2. The tradition focused on day to day moral issues: telling the truth in the face of temptation, being polite or obeying legitimate authority - say in the context of drinking and driving.
3. The tradition assumed that no single agency had sole responsibility for moral education, but also assumed that there was common agreement in society about what constituted moral behaviour.
4. The tradition assumed that moral conduct of the young needed persistent and pervasive reinforcement. To this end, literature, proverbs, legends, drama, ritual and folk tales were used for cautionary purposes, and systems of real and symbolic reward were invented in schools.
5. The tradition saw an important relationship between the advancement of moral learning and the suppression of wrong conduct. Thus wrong acts, especially in the presence of the young were to be aggressively punished.
6. The tradition was not hostile to intellectual analysis of moral problems, but attempted to limit it to those who had undergone habit oriented instruction and displayed appropriate deference to "experts".
7. The tradition assumed that moral values were transmitted through persistent and intimate personal interaction.
8. The tradition treated learners as members of groups which could act as reference points for communicating values.
9. The tradition was pessimistic about the feasibility or value of breaking with previous socialization patterns.

Wynne summarized the foundations of the tradition as acknowledging that moral formation is complex; to be effective it has to be incremental, diverse, pervasive, persistent and rigorous. The more frequent and the more diverse the techniques applied, the more likely it is that the moral character of youth will be formed.

The Developmental approach

The developmentalist approach has been based on the work of Kohlberg (1963) on stages of moral development. Kohlberg discerned six stages which fall into three different levels of moral thought:

Level One: Pre-moral level:

Stage one is a morality based on punishment and its avoidance. There is no true moral obligation, no concept of the rights of others and no true

respect for authority, only deference to those who have the power to punish.

Stage two is a hedonistic morality, centred on the notion that actions that satisfy needs are justified for that reason. Conformity tothe rules is for the purpose of gaining favours and rewards from others - a conception of morality in which each party is seen as trying to maximise his or her profits regardless of the profits of others.

Level Two: Conventional role conformity level:

Stage three is a morality based on understanding and adjusting to other people's points of view. The purpose of right behaviour is to please others and the right action is defined by the general consensus of others. Kohlberg has described this as the "good boy-nice girl" orientation.

Stage four is based on respect for authority. Moral obligation is equated with duty to social and religious authority and the motive behind moral action is the desire to avoid letting authority down and incurring censure.

Level Three: Self accepted moral principles

Stage five is the morality of contract, of individual rights and democratically accepted law. Morality is now internalized and autonomous and it is judged right that an individual should go against the expectations of others and of authority if his or her conscience so dictates. There is the recognition that all individuals have rights which are independent of their status, role and social importance.

Stage six is the morality of individual principles of conscience. The morality of stage five is lifted to the level of universal principles fpr guiding conduct.

Gilligan (Garbarino, 1985) has objected to Kohlberg's theories on the grounds that they reflect the moral development of males rather than females by underrating the greater sensitivity of women to what others think. She proposed three alternative levels:

1. Individual survival.
2. Self-sacrifice.
3. Nonviolence

Gilligan suggests that, just as in the case of Kohlberg's stages, the third level is not reached by many people. Gilligan's third-level woman is aware of her own needs as well as those of others. She is more assertive than the level-two woman but is very concerned to cause as little hurt as possible both to herself and to others.

Since both Kohlberg and Gilligan accept that many members of society do not develop beyond Level two, it may appear that Wynne's suggestions that behaviour should be given the greatest attention can be justified since our aim is physically to limit the association of driving and alcohol. However, to adopt this approach would be to place drinking and driving under the heading of social convention rather than morality - to link it solely with punishment and reward, rather than with right thinking. Nucci (1986) has suggested that much of the discussion about moral development has confused what is "proper" with what is "moral" and refers to some 27 research studies which have shown that morality and convention represent distinct developmental systems and that morality is primarily

associated with hurt and justice.

4. Developing moral sensibilities through school curricula

It seems that the issue of drinking and driving falls both in the realm of morality and that of social convention. Driving under the influence of drink is not only immoral in the sense that it may easily lead to hurt and injustice, but it also meets with social opprobrium, at least at the theoretical level, and it is illegal.

If we are to dissuade young people from engaging in the socially undesirable and illegal practice of driving after drinking alcohol until such time that they develop levels of moral development where such behaviour is avoided autonomously, then action must be taken on a wide front, that is, at the rule level of teaching convention and punishment as well as in ways designed to encourage progress to Kohlberg's higher levels of moral development.

This in itself, however, remains problematic. Turiel (1983) has explained how children's conceptions of social convention are developed through observation and communication with others. However, since these conventions are complex, children are generally expected to learn and comply with them before they understand the reasons why such behaviours are considered reasonable and right. Furthermore, as Nucci (1986) points out, to understand the importance of social conventions, children need to understand interpersonal relationships, social systems and the role of behavioural norms. The fact that such constructs take time to develop might not be such a problem were it not for the fact that such development appears to follow an oscillating pattern between periods affirming the importance of convention and phases negating it. It would be interesting to discover the relationship between such periods and the probability of young people drinking and driving.

This appears to force us back to a concentration on developing general moral conduct as identified by Wynne as part of his Great Tradition. However, here again there is a problem. In a series of research studies in the 1920s, Hartschorne and May concluded that good conduct is relatively situation-specific. A person may routinely act correctly in one situation and incorrectly in another, slightly different one. This suggests that moral attitudes cannot be developed by a single approach.

Perhaps, given the specificity of moral conduct, special courses should be mounted with the express intention of influencing both attitudes and conduct related to a single area of behaviour. However, the problem of this approach is two-fold. Firstly, it relates back to the overcrowded curriculum and the competing demands of many major issues facing society. A very incomplete list of these competing issues was suggested above. Secondly, it refers to the status of "special" programmes inserted into the "normal" school curriculum. Special programmes face a number of problems of their own.

Firstly is the problem of timing - given the variations in the development of students in schools, whenever the programme is offered, a short programme is likely to be at the "wrong" time for a large proportion

of the students.

Secondly, special programmes suffer from a sense of artificiality and discontinuity compared with normal school life. School subjects have developed status positions of their own, and extra additions are frequently placed at the bottom of the pecking order in terms of the importance attributed to them by students.

Thirdly, the life of such programmes is notoriously short once the support of the programme development team is withdrawn. Writing of one his own programmes, Kohlberg (1985) commented:

> "While the intervention operation was a complete success, the patient died. When we went back a year later, we found not a single teacher had continued ... after the commitment to the research had ended"

Fourthly, special programmes, especially if conducted by adults other than the usual teachers in the school, may imply a hidden curriculum to which the students may be more atuned than the surface curriculum. Aspy et al. (1986) comment on the relationships between teachers and taught: "students expect to see in our lives the virtues we extol; when they do not see them, they know our words lie". At the moral level, if special programmes are taught by outsiders or solely by using a special package of materials, then the regular teachers may be demeaned by the implication that those teachers are not committed to the message of the programme.

The success of a special programme may also be influenced by the exemplary role of teachers as portrayed in the content studied in the mainstream of the school curriculum. Most students (and parents) see the main work of schools as being in the traditional subject areas. Since teachers are frequently associated, both in their own minds and those of their students, with specific subject areas, programmes which lie outside those areas, and which are perhaps taught by outsiders to the school, may be seen by students and teachers alike as peripheral to the main purpose of the school.

5. How should the issue of drink driving be introduced into the school curriculum?

Drink driving involves aspects of content knowledge - of the law, the effects of alcohol on the human body and the association of alcohol with road traffic accidents - and affective knowledge in the areas of moral development and knowledge of social convention. This has led many writers who have addressed themselves to the role of affective education in the curriculum, whether they take an absolutist conduct-based approach or a developmental approach, to agree that a widely based approach, extending over a considerable period of time, and integrating cognitive and affective areas, is needed.

Thus, Nucci (1986) concludes his paper by asserting that morality is centred on a set of universal concerns for justice, fairness and human welfare, and that the developmental basis of moral knowledge is commensurate with interactive rather that directive educational practice. Nucci has interpreted his summary of the research on moral development into five doctrines for educational practice:

1. Moral education should focus on issues of justice and human welfare;
2. Effective moral education programs are integrated within the existing school curriculum rather than treated as separate programs or units;
3. Moral development is best promoted when students (over the age of about eight years) who are at slightly different stages of moral development are encouraged to discuss moral problems and are free to disagree about the best solutions;
4. Both moral and academic progress are encouraged by co-operative learning methods;
5. Classroom management should be consistent with the moral principles being expounded.

Degenhardt (1986) has made a plea for the traditional disciplines to be used as the basis for achieving understanding of contemporary issues, and asserts that only by basing the curriculum on the established forms of intellectual endeavour can the problems of indoctrination be avoided.

Wick (1987) has commented that:

> "Every instructional area can find appropriate content for a programme in character education. ....the content should fit naturally into the usual flow of instruction for the course at hand. Additionally, the instruction should stay at a high intellectual level. The notion that cognitive suggests higher levels of thinking than affective is foolishness; evaluation is the highest cognitive level, and it requires values and judgement."

Beane (1986) includes, as major contributors to students' affective development, situations in which teachers "transcend the simple knowledge-of-facts level in standard subjects or skill areas; they encourage learners to consider personal-social meanings in literary works, historical incidents, mathematical problems, scientific advancements, artistic works, industrial technologies, and so on". He lists a number of problems implicit in many programmes designed to further affective education which closely match the list provided by Nucci (1986). Beane warns (after Lockwood, 1978) that using such techniques as values clarification in isolation, in separate courses or time-blocks, has little effect on values.

Finally, I should like to cite an early working paper from the U.K. Schools Council (1971) in which there is a report of the Moral Education Curriculum Project. This project investigated the nature of moral education, the ways in which teachers approached the task of moral education, and the problems of motivating high school students so that they would actually behave moraly in real-life situations. The approaches advocated as a result of this study included decisions:
1. not to think of moral education as a separate school subject;
2. to develop materials which can be used in a variety of subject situations; and
3. to urge schools to introduce types of interpersonal interaction consistent with the aim of moral development.

6. Where to put Drink-Driving in the school curriculum

In considering the relationship between the traditional high school curriculum and the need to influence students' association of drinking and driving, it is useful to think in terms of the content of the teaching in the various content areas and the context in which that content may be taught. Thus, a mathematics teacher may wish to teach various statistical concepts and be quite happy to teach them in the context of drinking and driving. Similarly, a geography teacher may wish to investigate the concept of areal differentiation and be happy to do so in a drink driving context. There can be few areas of the curriculum in which drinking and driving could not provide a useful context - and often provide students with a sense of motivation frequently lacking in the contexts conventionally adopted in schools. Here is my provisional list:

History : - the place of alcohol in western societies throughout history, with special attention to Australia;
- the development of social and legal controls on alcohol;
- comparative attitudes to alcohol and other drugs in various societies at avarious times;
- changing attitudes to drinking by men and women in the last 200 years;

English Literature: - Explorations of the effects of alcohol on family life as portrayed in literature;
- How do families berieved through an accident caused by a drink driver feel?
- Why do we all love Falstaff? Les Patterson?
- Biblio-therapy

Geography: - Is there a geographical pattern at the local, state, national, international scale to drink-related crime? What could be the reasons for this?

Politics/Legal Studies: - How far can/should the law intervene in the pleasures of individuals?
- Should the law take individual differences in alcohol tolerance into account?
- What is the law on drinking and driving in our state? Australia? Elsewhere in the world? Why should the laws be different in different places?

Science/Biology: - What are the effects of alcohol on the physical abilities of human beings and can these be measured?
- How reliable are various measures of alcohol impairment and what factors influence the measurements?

Religious Education: - What was the place of alcohol in biblical times?
- Why was Jesus' first miracle to change water into wine?

Modern Languages - studies of the place of alcohol in various cultures

Physical education/ health education: - How does alcohol affect sporting ability, co-ordination and performance?

Mathematics: - statistical studies on drinking and driving
e.g. Probability of being caught if drinking and driving.
How to compare the incidence of drinking and driving in different age groups, areas, cultures

Computer studies: - the use of spreadsheets and data bases to explore hypotheses about various aaspects of drinking and driving.

Language arts: It is interesting that in a recent paper on assignment writing using a word processor, Fraser and O'Neill chose an assignment related to the toll of road traffic accidents to illustrate their technique.

Music - "The water music", Drinking songs?, When should the interval be at the Queensland Cultural Centre?

7. Future directions for Drink-Driving Educators

Although all these areas could provide pabulum for students to consider the role of alcohol in our society and the legal position, social conventions and morality of misusing alcohol, it is perhaps unreasonable to expect teachers to have the information required to teach their subjects with a drink-driving focus. In many subject areas, the decision about the context in which a topic is to be taught depends on the availability of suitable resources.

Based on the arguments above, it appears that curriculum pressure groups and those whose area of expertise lies in the drinking-driving area could have the greatest long term influence on school students by working with those whose area of expertise lies in school-based education to provide teachers with materials designed to be integrated into existing curriculum areas.

In this way, the primary message of those whose concern is with drinking and driving:
1. would be presented to students throughout their secondary school (and perhaps primary school) careers,
2. would be presented in such a way as to lead to situation-specific training and discussion on the issues of drinking and driving,
3. would contribute to the general aims of moral education,
4. would contribute to the integration of cognitive and affective education
5. illustrate a practical application of the analytical methods taught as part of the subjects of the traditional curriculum.

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